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SIPDIS
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DEPT OF JUSTICE FOR ICITAP MARK MOGLE
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BISHKEK FOR INL AND SLEA
DUSHANBE FOR INL AND SLEA
ASHGABAT FOR INL

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SUBJECT: INL UZBEKISTAN: NEW COMPUTER NETWORK SUPPORTS FORENSIC
SCIENCE

REF: 09 TASHKENT 1233

¶1. SUMMARY: A secure wireless computer network was installed at the Main Forensic Bureau of the Uzbek Ministry of Health with assistance from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and the Department of Justice International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). This important upgrade is a part of the ongoing effort to help the Main Forensic Bureau conform to international standards of forensic science. The ultimate goal of this program is to uphold the rule of law in Uzbekistan by enabling forensic scientists to provide the hard evidence that is at the heart of any successful criminal investigation. END SUMMARY.

INL/ICITAP FORENSIC LAB IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

¶2. The role of forensic sciences in the rule of law cannot be overstated. Encouraging proper documentation of evidence and stressing the implementation of recognized international standards will help to develop a credible criminal justice system in Uzbekistan. It is as important to clear the innocent as it is to punish the guilty, and the INL/ICITAP Forensic Lab Improvement Project teaches forensic scientists and law enforcement officers to think along these lines. The INL Bureau and ICITAP have been assisting the Main Forensic Bureau as it attempts to achieve accreditation by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Evidence analyzed in the Bureau laboratories is used in a wide range of criminal cases, including homicide, serious injuries, sexual assaults and cases involving toxic substances and narcotics. Officers from the Main Forensic Bureau also regularly train forensic officers from other regions of Uzbekistan and representatives of different law enforcement agencies.

¶3. A variety of scientific equipment and training courses have been delivered, and the program has achieved steady development in the area of forensic expertise and overall lab improvement. However, it was clear that the Main Forensic Bureau was capable of greater improvements. The major factors that were slowing the laboratory's work were weak communication between laboratory personnel, inefficient methods of generating new forensic documents and updating old forensic documents, lack of computer equipment and computer skills, and lack of contact with the international forensic community.

NEW COMPUTER NETWORK SOLVES MANY PROBLEMS

¶4. Providing the Bureau with a reliable computer network offered a single solution to all of the above-mentioned problems. The network, installed by embassy personnel, connects all of the forensic departments and provides them with a link to the international forensic community.

¶5. On June 26, Ambassador Norland signed over computer equipment

and software worth approximately \$62,000, and on December 14, visiting U.S. forensic experts Dr. Mozayani and Dr. Posey officially inaugurated the new, secure wireless forensic computer network. The network was tested by the lab personnel during October and November to ensure that system was working properly.

¶6. The forensic computer network is a fully secure, wireless computer network with complete anti-virus protection that can accommodate 200 email accounts. The wireless network covers the entire compound of the Main Forensic Bureau. It consists of fifteen laptops, three servers (domain controller, email, and file servers), and a shared printer and scanner. It is connected to the Internet, and a unique name was registered for the Main Forensic Bureau's use: FME.UZ (FME stands for forensic medical examiners). Prior to the completion of this project, the Main Forensic Bureau, which is the top forensic bureau in the country, had only four outdated, stand-alone desktop computers that were full of viruses and Trojans.

¶7. During the two-month testing phase, the newly installed network had already achieved the following:

a. The standardized computer system connected all personnel of the Main Forensic Bureau and initiated fruitful communication and

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cooperation. During the months of October and November alone, the lab upgraded more of the Bureau's instructions and documents to ISO standards than they had in the last five years.

b. Lab experts received network access to a shared computer drive that includes forensic manuals, forensic document templates, reference materials, and self-study materials.

c. Network access to forensic manuals improved speed and consistency and reduced errors in the preparation of scientific reports by allowing all staff to work from a single source of information. The bureau also plans to create separate databases that will be shared within the toxicology, biology, histology, and financial management departments.

d. All data is backed up from a single point on a scheduled basis.

e. Working practices are streamlined, service standards are higher, and laboratory staff deal with more law enforcement queries faster. For example, now each forensic report from the histology, biology, and anthropology sections includes a digital picture.

f. The network also allows remote secure access. Two Uzbek forensic experts who traveled to the U.S. in November had a chance to test the system and keep up with their work in Uzbekistan during their trip. In the future, INL Tashkent hopes to connect all forensic departments in Uzbekistan to the network. An integrated network would ensure that forensic instruction that meets international standards is used not only in Tashkent, but in the regions as well.

g. The computer network reduced costs for the Main Forensic Bureau by sharing peripherals such as a printer and scanner and also by digitalizing and storing information in one centralized database.

h. Forensic scientists and lab personnel now have Internet access. An Uzbek toxicologist has already taken advantage of this new resource by registering with the International Toxicology Association, which allows for access to toxicology databases, discussion boards, new books and manuals.

i. The network has improved computer security and anti-virus protection and established authorized access control for sensitive documents related to a criminal case investigation.

FUTURE PLANS

¶8. Additional computer training would be very beneficial for all forensic bureau personnel. The project could potentially be expanded to deliver similar benefits outside of Tashkent by connecting regional forensic bureaus to the computer network. Such an expansion would require delivery of at least two computers to each of the 14 regional departments, and five additional computers to the Main Forensic Bureau.

¶9. The Main Forensic Laboratory of the Ministry of Health, along

with its provincial branches, is an important resource supporting criminal investigations in Uzbekistan. Unfortunately, funding for this INL project came to an end this fiscal year. In accordance with our Mission Strategic Plan to continue general support of this successful laboratory improvement project, INL Tashkent has requested additional financial assistance of \$500,000.

¶10. In case of specific questions please contact Political Officer Katrisa Peffley at office telephone: (998-71) 140-2113 or e-mail: peffleykb@state.gov or INL LES Dmitry Dogovorov at office telephone: (998-71)120-5450, cellular: (998-93) 180-6450 or unclassified email: dogovorovd@state.gov.
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